CHIPOTLE BECOMES ONLY NATIONAL RESTAURANT BRAND TO USE NO ADDED COLORS, FLAVORS OR PRESERVATIVES IN ITS FOOD

Multi-Year Quest to Develop Better Tasting, Preservative-Free Tortilla Complete; Company's Food Now Includes Only 51 Real, Delicious Ingredients

DENVER--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar. 28, 2017-- Chipotle Mexican Grill (NYSE: CMG) announced that it has become the only national restaurant brand with no added colors, flavors or preservatives in any of the ingredients it uses to prepare its food (except for lemon and lime juices which can be used as preservatives, though Chipotle uses them only for taste). This applies to all Chipotle restaurants in the United States and does not include beverages. The accomplishment furthers the company's mission to make better food accessible to everyone. Details about each of the company's ingredients can be seen at http://www.chipotle.com/real.

Two years ago, the company began working to eliminate unnecessary additives and preservatives from the tortillas it uses to make burritos, tacos and chips. The new tortillas are now served in all the company's U.S. restaurants, and were tested extensively in Chipotle restaurants around the country beginning in January. The new recipes for corn and flour tortillas now contain between two and five ingredients. For example, the new flour tortillas are made using only flour, water, canola oil, salt and yeast. The corn tortillas used for the chips are made only with corn masa flour and water.

"We have always used high quality ingredients and prepared them using classic cooking techniques," said Steve Ells, Chipotle Founder, Chairman and CEO. "We never resorted to using added colors or flavors like many other fast food companies do simply because these industrial additives often interfere with the taste of the food. However, commercially available tortillas, whether they are for us or someone else, use dough conditioners and preservatives. I've been on a quest for a better tasting tortilla for years, and we finally achieved a tortilla made the way you would make them at home, and they are simply delicious. Ultimately, all of the decisions we make about the ingredients we use are about making the very best tasting food we can."

Chipotle has long been a pioneer in serving better quality ingredients. This includes the use of local and organically grown produce when available and practical, dairy from cows raised on pasture and meats from animals raised without hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics. Additionally, none of the ingredients used in Chipotle's food have been genetically modified. With the introduction of its new tortillas, the company now touts only 51 real ingredients used to prepare all of its food. This is in stark contrast to most other fast food chains where a single menu item can contain 40 or more ingredients — many of which are added flavors, colors, preservatives and other industrial additives.

"When helping people find ways to eat well, I always encourage them to look for food made with simple ingredients, and without unnecessary additives. Even the word 'natural,' when it comes to additives, can be misleading because there are added colors and added flavors that can be labeled as 'natural,'" said Ellie Krieger, RD, Nutritionist, Chef, and host of the public television show, "Ellie's Real Good Food." "And when I go out to eat, I seek out restaurants that use the same real, high-quality ingredients I use in my own kitchen. That's why I absolutely love what Chipotle is doing here."

Chipotle's accomplishment comes at a time when other fast food brands are scrambling to clean up their ingredient statements as consumers turn away from processed foods and foods with added colors, flavors, preservatives and other industrial additives. But nearly every fast food chain has chosen the easier path of simply switching from artificial flavors and colors to "natural" versions of additives that serve the same purpose. Some fast food companies have gone so far as to designate the preservatives they use as "natural" even though nearly all preservatives identified in FDA rules are known as "chemical preservatives."

Evidence of how confusing the distinction between artificial and natural additives can be is illustrated by looking at the ingredient statement from what is arguably fast food's most popular offering: the French fry. Typical fast food French fries contain several ingredients including "natural beef flavor." Even though it contains no beef, the "natural" beef designation can be used simply because the chemical is derived from plant material.

"Rather than switching from artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners and preservatives to 'natural' alternatives of the same additives, fast food companies should be asking why their food needs added colors, flavors, sweeteners and preservatives in the first place," said Mark Crumpacker, Chief Marketing and Development Officer for Chipotle. "Because we prepare our fresh food using classic cooking techniques, we avoid using the industrial additives typically associated with fast food — but most importantly, that approach is the reason our food is so delicious."

The company also released a "visual ingredient statement" which visually depicts the ingredients in each of its menu items. The visual ingredient statement can be seen at http://www.chipotle.com/ingredients.

Chipotle defines "national restaurant brand" as any restaurant brand included in the *Nation's Restaurant News* top 200 list (August 2016) having more than 100 total U.S. locations. The company's statements that it uses no added colors, flavors or preservatives apply only to Chipotle branded restaurants operating within the U.S., and only to the ingredients used to prepare

food and not to ingredients used in the beverages sold at Chipotle.

ABOUT CHIPOTLE

Steve Ells, founder, chairman and CEO, started Chipotle with the idea that food served fast did not have to be a typical fast food experience. Today, Chipotle continues to offer a focused menu of burritos, tacos, burrito bowls, and salads made from fresh, high-quality raw ingredients, prepared using classic cooking methods and served in an interactive style allowing people to get exactly what they want. Chipotle seeks out the finest ingredients that are not only fresh, but that are raised responsibly, with respect for the animals, land, and people who produce them. Chipotle prepares its food without the use of added colors, flavors or preservatives typically found in fast food. Chipotle opened with a single restaurant in Denver in 1993 and now operates more than 2,200 restaurants. For more information, visit Chipotle.com.

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